1: Linton E-5 (1926-27) 1933 FY8 Tanala FY8

the spot, or, if the king was merciful, he was expelled and all his goods seized. 695

"Milano-rano.—The Tanala firmly believe that certain crocodiles are endowed with a faculty which makes it possible for them to render justice. They are employed to judge an affair which seems dark. The ceremony is held on the bank of a river inhabited by ferocious crocodiles. Everyone assembles there and keeps silence so as not to frighten the animals. The *Anakandriana* places an open *tandra* [pair of blacksmith's tongs] on the edge of the river and strikes the water three times. He invokes the *Zanahary* and the ancestors, asking that the accused be devoured if guilty and allowed to pass safely if innocent. When he has finished the accused advances, steps over the *tandra* and plunges into the river. He swims to the other bank and back. If he is guilty, the crocodiles take him, if innocent he passes safely. When he gets back all raise a cry of *Vita! Vita!* [Finished!] and the young people plunge into the river to receive him. After the ceremony he returns to his village and his accuser kills an ox to indemnify him."

Although all these ordeals appear severe to a European the natives seem to have submitted to them without much trepidation. There were a fair number of acquittals. An old Menabe informant who had himself undergone the ordeal of the hot spade told me that he had been helped by an *ombiasy*, who rubbed his tongue with an evil tasting root. This produced profuse saliva and as he barely touched his tongue to the iron he was unharmed.

A guilty *mpamosavy* was practically always killed and his goods appropriated by the king. There was no official executioner, the bystanders falling upon the man and spearing him to death. Special offenders were sometimes burned alive. 696

MENABE LEGAL SYSTEM

The legal system of the Menabe was less developed than that of the Ikongo, due to the absence of large political groupings. Nearly all their laws had been handed down from such ancient times that their origin had been forgotten. New laws could be enacted by the *Notables* and chief of the gens, but seem rarely to have been made. Court procedure was less formal and in civil cases the litigants were not represented by counsel, although they would seek advice from persons skilled in the law before coming into court. Evidence was taken as among the Ikongo. In criminal cases there was still less formality, the *Fokonolona* as a whole deciding whether the accused 671 695